

PAC Feb 2023 Draft Resolutions

Minneapolis 2023 Winter Maintenance Study

As Minneapolis undertakes a new winter maintenance study, the PAC urges City leaders and Public Works to seek and reveal viewpoints representative of all of Minneapolis, and to deliver creative and forward-looking winter maintenance solutions. Being a truly world class city for all residents and visitors to Minneapolis in winter requires this level of commitment.

On Being a Winter Pedestrian in Minneapolis

Minneapolis is well-known for its winter culture. Residents and visitors embrace the cold climate with outdoor activities, festivals, markets, and other social gatherings. We as a city can demonstrate winter pride by striving for a safely navigable Minneapolis in all seasons. The purpose of this resolution is to improve the pedestrian and bicycle winter maintenance study and secure additional funding to implement evidence-based solutions from the study.

Being a pedestrian in the winter in Minneapolis should be safe, comfortable, and accessible for all residents regardless of neighborhood, age, ability, or mode of movement. These conditions do not exist due to poor sidewalk clearing, which creates several issues for pedestrians:

1. Residents face isolation when pedestrian or transit options are inaccessible due to dangerous and neglected snowy, icy streets.
2. Individuals with access to vehicles become more likely to drive during the winter, leading to an increase in vehicle trips, road congestion, and emissions.
3. Pedestrians navigating poor sidewalk conditions are at an increased risk of injury and tend to walk in the street with vehicle traffic.
4. Neighborhoods become less vibrant as people are forced to stay indoors, or choose private vehicle transportation, which can lead to decreased neighborhood cohesion.
5. Sidewalk clearing is only one part of a much larger systemic issue, and we urge the City to consider a wide range of innovative solutions, especially as a changing climate means warmer and wetter winters with more severe weather events.

PAC Recommended Winter Maintenance Study Elements

1. Encompassing of many interest groups, both in official advisory capacity and in broader view.
2. A comprehensive community engagement strategy that considers what voices are present and actively seeks voices that are missing. Community engagement must go well beyond 311 calls.
3. Strong consideration of aging populations and those with mobility challenges that keep them fully or partially homebound in winter due to difficulty in navigating pedestrian infrastructure.
4. Blunt appraisal of equity and the experience of residents in traditionally under-invested neighborhoods and ensure that winter maintenance does not continue to disproportionately adversely impact those areas.
5. A consideration of quick build solutions for near term improvements to pedestrian experience while considering a long-term plan to address quality of life, safety, and increased access to pedestrian experiences.

6. Sidewalk design, complete street modifications, and alternatives to salt should be considered and incorporated. Study the drainage design of sidewalks which is particularly important given increasing freeze/thaw cycles with climate breakdown. Consider the co-location of storm drains and curb ramps.
7. An understanding of all modes people use to navigate the city including walking, biking, transit, and driving. Create a study design that connects users of all modes and does not inherently center car and driving experiences over other travel modes.
8. An accounting of indirect costs (financial, social, opportunity, etc.) of injuries due to inadequate winter maintenance.
9. Recognition that all winters are not the same and not all snow events are the same.
10. Recognition that a snow event in December will call for a different response than an identical snow in March.

PAC Recommended Winter Maintenance Study Elements

1. The encompassing of many interest groups, both in official advisory capacity and from broader Minneapolis.
2. A comprehensive community engagement strategy that considers what voices are present and actively seeks voices that are missing. Community engagement must go well beyond 311 calls.
3. Inclusion of aging populations and those with mobility challenges that keep them fully or partially homebound in winter due to difficulty in navigating pedestrian infrastructure.
4. Blunt appraisal of equity and the experience of residents in traditionally underinvested neighborhoods and ensure that winter maintenance does not continue to disproportionately adversely impact those areas.
5. Consideration of quick build solutions for near term improvements to pedestrian experience while considering a long-term plan to address quality of life, safety, and increased access to pedestrian experiences.
6. Sidewalk design, complete street modifications, and alternatives to salt should be considered and incorporated. Study the drainage design of sidewalks which is particularly important given increasing freeze/thaw cycles with climate breakdown. Consider the co-location of storm drains and curb ramps.
7. An understanding of all modes people use to navigate the city including walking, biking, transit, and driving. Create a study design that connects users of all modes and does not inherently center car and driving experiences over other travel modes.
8. An accounting of indirect costs (financial, social, opportunity, etc.) of injuries due to inadequate winter maintenance.
9. Recognition that all winters are not the same and not all snow events are the same.
10. Recognition that a snow event in December will call for a different response than an identical snow in March.
11. Expansion of existing programs to attack pain points immediately.
 - a) Sidewalk corners that become virtually impassable hurdles thanks 100% to city plows.
 - b) Inches of slush left behind by single-pass plowing.

2nd Street South Resurfacing and Pedestrian Improvements

PAC supports the 2nd Street South Resurfacing and Pedestrian Improvements project design for its narrowed road widths and shorter crossing distances, pedestrian refuge islands being made permanent, and the off-street protected bike path.

PAC prefers the north side placement of the bike path for its greater sun exposure during the snow season. Should the north side placement be untenable at any point of the corridor we ask that the path be moved to the south side in full, rather than having the path shifting mid-point from one side to the other.

PAC calls for a final design phase built on engagement with all users of the corridor: residents, visitors, and those relying on South 2nd Street for safe travel to destinations beyond.

PAC also recommend the following improvements:

- Closure of the 13th Ave sidewalk gap (in partnership with the U of M).
- Marked crosswalks and/or raised crossings at priority intersections.
- Reduction of unused or underused driveway curb cuts.

2023 PAC Capital Improvement Program Resolution

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee continues to advocate for capital improvement projects that elevate and prioritize pedestrian needs in the City of Minneapolis. A dense and connected network of 24/7/365 pedestrian routes is critical to community vitality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, social engagement, basic disability rights, racial justice, public safety, senior independence and family well-being, public health, and the overall wellbeing of our city. We ask that CIP incorporate the following:

- Accessibility features enabling safe and comfortable travel for all users of pedestrian infrastructure
- Increased funding for sidewalk repair (the current plan leaves sidewalk repair with the smallest percentage of allocated funds)
- Plans to develop and improve drainage so that sidewalks and curb cuts are useable in winter and spring seasons as well as after intense precipitation.
- Use of CIP funding to include benches in pedestrian projects, particularly in downtown and other areas where benches have been removed; benches are the most basic pedestrian infrastructure and crucial to walkable neighborhoods for many people, especially those with disabilities or traveling with children
- Continued rapid implementation of 4-to-3 lane conversions
- Halt the roll-back of automatic pedestrian recall along major corridors and downtown, and instead focus on improving pedestrian signalization

The well-established urgency of climate collapse means that our Public Works Department must show leadership in applying their immense expertise to material climate issues of encouraging modeshare shift, basic safe and comfortable walking/wheelchair access for all residents regardless of disability or neighborhood, and laying the foundation for iterative, flexible, and innovative plans that can meet the needs of the rapid changes we are starting to experience. As the PAC, we encourage Public Works to be bold in its use of the CIP, rather than continuing to build for a world that is eroding beneath our streets.